

Final Examination Questions

This final examination will be worth 100 points or 20% of your final grade this semester. Please bring a blank blue book or blank loose-leaf paper for your answers. You may bring to class a single notecard (3 x 5 or 4 x 6, but no bigger), but no other notes. You may not use your books during the writing of the examination. There will be two parts to the exam.

Part I (10 points). Short answer questions.

Part II (90 points). I will provide you with question selected from the following list. You will write an essay in response to three of them. The arrangement of questions will allow for some choice,

1. How does Toni Morrison's *Love* actually represent love? Where and how does it appear? What is the relationship between love in the novel and the novel's primary thematic and stylistic concerns?
2. Compare (and contrast) the representation of fear in Richard Wright's *Native Son* to the representation of fear in Edgar Allan Poe's short fiction. Pay attention to issues of literary style and form as well as the text's own conception of the meaning and nature of fear.
3. Imagine you are a feminist theorist. Using one or two of the texts that we have studied so far this semester (Nussbaum, Jaggar, Darwin, Robinson, Sedgwick, or anything else), how would you respond to Plato's assertion that literature "has a terrible power to corrupt" in part because it seduces us into enjoying and admiring "womanish" displays of emotion when we should be disgusted by them and admire instead those who handle their emotions "in silence like men."
4. Select *one* of the following to be your text: "The Black Cat," "Berenice," "27 Wagons Full of Cotton," "Portrait of a Madonna," "The Cowboy's Lament," "The Slave Auction," "Rock Me to Sleep," "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," or any one of Hahn's "Pity" poems. After selecting your text, contrast the types of questions that you would ask of this text using any two of the following six approaches to emotion: (1) psychoanalytic, (2) Aristotelian, (3) cognitive, (4) reparative, (5) new critical, or (6) physiological. When you draw directly from the work of a particular theorist or critic, mention her or him and how you are using her or his work.
5. How did you *feel* about this course? In what ways would your feelings about the course matter or not matter? Keeping in mind that some emotion theorists separate individual feelings from truth and meaning (Wimsatt and Beardsely, for example) while others link them (the cognitive-evaluative theorists, for instance), explain your answer with reference to your feelings, to the texts studied in the course, and to what you *learned*.

6. Select one of the following emotions: pity, sadness/grief, shame, anger, or paranoia. Using whatever combination of theoretical and literary texts you like (as long as you use texts we studied this semester and you use at least one text in a specific way), write an essay that provides us with a basic understanding of the emotion selected. What are its general characteristics, causes, effects, relationship to other emotions, or anything else you consider important to a basic understanding of that emotion? What do you find most interesting or significant about this emotion and/or its representation in literature?
7. Select any of the shorter literary texts we've studied this semester (short story, poem, or sermon) and uncover or explain its own theory of emotion, the theory of emotion that exists within the text itself. What does this text have to say about emotion? What does it teach us about emotion?
8. From the founding of the nation to the present, the politics of race in the United States has been an intensely emotional issue. Using *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Native Son*, and *Love*, discuss the ways that literary texts have entered this debate and the struggle over the politics of race in America.
9. What exactly is sentimentality? Explain your answer with specific references to literary, critical, or theoretical texts we've studied this semester?
10. This is a straightforward question. Choose a particularly moving object from a literary text that we've read this semester. It might be an orphan, animal, monster, ghost, child, mentally ill person, criminal, person facing their own (possible) death, character who has experienced a great loss, or whatever. Explain, as clearly and specifically as you can, how and why this object is able to stir such powerful emotional responses in readers.